

Dam Safety Fact Sheet

July 2004

The extraordinarily heavy rainfall on July 12, 2004, had a devastating effect on Burlington County. Thirteen dams completely failed and approximately 15 others were damaged, some seriously. This fact sheet is intended to help dam owners recover from this storm. Dam owners can choose to remove, reconstruct or repair their dams. Any dam reconstruction must follow current dam safety standards.



Governor McGreevey makes funding available to dam owners

Immediately after the storm, Governor James E. McGreevey reopened the application period for New Jersey's Dam Restoration Loan Program. Applications must be received by Sept. 30, 2004. The 20-year loans at 2% interest are available for restoration, reconstruction or removal of publicly or privately owned dams. Private owners must have a municipal co-borrower. To qualify for funding, dam owners must have a conceptual engineering design sufficient enough to establish a cost estimate for the project. For more information, visit the DEP Dam Safety Web page <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/damsafety/engineer.htm> or contact John Ritchey at (609) 984-0859.

Also, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) may provide assistance for publicly owned dams in the declared disaster area. Other federal assistance may be available for privately owned dams. For more information on federal funding, contact FEMA.

Reconstruction, Repair or Removal Options

Failed Dams

Owners of all failed dams must remove debris from the breach to allow water to flow freely.

If an owner intends to replace the dam, it will be necessary to comply with the New Jersey Dam Safety Standards, N.J.A.C. 7:20-1.1 et seq. (<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/damsafety/standard.pdf>) and to obtain the following permits:

- Dam Restoration Permit
- Freshwater Wetlands General Permit No. 18
- Pinelands Commission Certificate of Filing*

If an owner does not intend to replace the dam, it will be necessary to obtain a permit for the permanent removal of the structure. The items outlined in the New Jersey Dam Safety Standards at N.J.A.C. 7:20-1.7(h) must be addressed and the following permits obtained:

- Dam Removal Permit
- Freshwater Wetlands General Permit No. 18
- Pinelands Commission Certificate of Filing*

Damaged Dams:

If the impoundment was drawn down for safety reasons following the storm, the impoundment must remain drawn down until the DEP grants authorization to impound water behind the dam.

The DEP is sending letters to owners of damaged dams that an inspection must be performed by a New Jersey licensed professional engineer.

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Reconstruction, Repair or Removal Options

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The dam owner must address any deficiencies identified in the inspection report and any additional issues as required by the DEP. Before any repair work begins, the following permits may be required:

- Dam Restoration Permit
- Freshwater Wetlands General Permit No. 18
- Pinelands Commission Certificate of Filing*

The owner has the option of removing a dam provided the provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:20-1.7(h) are addressed and the following permits are obtained:

- Dam Removal Permit
- Freshwater Wetlands General Permit No. 18
- Pinelands Commission Certificate of Filing*

The DEP's Bureau of Dam Safety and Flood Control will be working closely with the Pinelands Commission to coordinate permit application reviews to ensure repairs are completed in a timely manner to protect the public.

* if applicable

Contact Information:

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Engineers

All dam inspections must be performed by a qualified licensed professional engineer. In addition, any work on a failed or damaged dam must be done according to approved plans and specifications prepared by a qualified licensed professional engineer with construction oversight provided by a qualified licensed professional engineer.

Before hiring an engineer, owners should determine that the individual meets the following criteria:

- Is a **licensed** New Jersey professional engineer.
- Is competent in areas related to dam investigation, design, construction, and operation for the type of dam under consideration.
- Has a minimum of 10 years of relevant experience in dam investigation, design, construction, operation and evaluation.
- Understands the effects of adverse dam incidents and failures and the potential causes of failures.

Also, dam owners are encouraged to solicit proposals from a number of firms, thoroughly research past performance, visit sites where prospective firms have completed work and seek references from former clients.

The Association of State Dam Safety Officials document titled "Procuring the Services of a Professional Engineer" is available at www.damsafety.org/documents/PDF/green.pdf.

While the DEP does not make recommendations on engineers, the Bureau of Dam Safety and Flood Control maintains a list of engineers who work on dams and can provide that information.

